

Memories of lost ski areas live on

CONWAY, N.H. (AP) — What began with a teenage boy's curiosity has grown into a 10-year-old effort to document hundreds of lost ski areas across New England.

Jeremy Davis makes a living in meteorology in New York, but has spent his free time over the last decade maintaining the New England Lost Ski Areas Project, a Web site devoted to preserving the history of defunct ski areas. The seeds were planted in 1991, when at age 14, Davis took a family ski trip to New Hampshire's Mount Washington Valley.

On their way to Cranmore and Black Mountain, the family passed by the former Mount Whittier Ski area in Ossipee, which closed in 1985. And at Black Mountain in Jackson, he saw the old trails of Tyrol Ski Area, which closed in 1981.

"I wondered what I could find out about that one, and others. I started looking for stuff — old guidebooks and maps in antique

stores and used book shops — but there wasn't much information out there at all," said Davis, who is speaking at the New England Ski Museum's annual conference on Sunday.

Ten years after starting with a handful of histories, the site now lists 659 ski areas, including 588 in New England. Several assistants help compile the information, which pours in at a rate of about 10 to 15 e-mails a day from people describing where they used to ski.

"It's a never ending process. There is so much stuff out there," Davis said. "What I feel good about is that all of this is digitalized information. Once it's on the Web site, it's preserved, and that is really important to me, because in 20 or 30 years, who is going to remember this stuff?"

The site lists 161 former ski areas in New Hampshire, 60 in Connecticut, four in Rhode Island, 172 in Massachusetts, 74 in Maine and 113 in Vermont.

Among the New Hampshire areas, Mount Whittier opened in 1948 and operated for nearly four decades with only a gondola and several T-bars. It was home to one of the nation's first four-person gondolas, which used to stop and pick up skiers at a mid-station along Route 16. The gondola towers are still in place, including one in the parking lot of a fast-food restaurant.

"The slopes were too steep for most novices, and were so wide the sun tended to melt the snow," Davis said, explaining the ski area's downfall.

The Intervale (N.H.) Ski Slope ski area, which operated from the mid 1930s to 1976, once attracted as many as 5,000 skiers a year to its three slopes but it suffered as larger competitors opened nearby. Today, the area has almost completely grown in. Relatives of one of its previous owners are renovating the old base lodge to turn it into their home.

Lost ski areas of Berkshire County

Listing	Town
Abbey Hill	Great Barrington
Beartown State Forest	South Lee
Berkshire Christian Academy	Lenox
Bernard's in the Notch	North Adams
Brodie	New Ashford
Clapp Park	Pittsfield
Conley's Hill	Clarksburg (Four Corners)
Cranwell Prep. School	Lenox
Crosby Ski Trail	Lenox
Elk Practice Slope (Whitcomb Summit)	Florida
G-Bar-S Ranch	Great Barrington
# Greylock Glen	Adams
Farnam's in the Berkshire's	Cheshire
Jacob's Ladder	Lee
Jug End	South Egremont
Leisure Lee	East Lee
Sheep Pasture (Bellows Pipe Trail)	Adams
Windsor Lake	North Adams

An area built, but never officially opened for skiers

Source: www.nelsap.org

